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SUMMERWORKS THEATRE FESTIVAL: RECORD BREAKING ATTENDANCE AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Marking two decades of exceptional summer theater, Toronto's **20th annual SummerWorks Theatre Festival** wrapped up yet another successful year by celebrating outstanding achievements in the arts at Sunday evening's annual awards ceremony at the **Factory Theatre Courtyard**. This year over 20,000 theatre and music lovers attended SummerWorks – the most in the festival's history. Consistently developing new initiatives each year while representing Canadian artists from across the country, SummerWorks is becoming known as the most influential and cherished arts festival in the country.

"Each year we're blown away by the public interest in the festival, and continually humbled and inspired by the caliber of artists who share their talent with Toronto. SummerWorks is an accurate demonstration of the overwhelming amount of great artists found right here in our own backyard and throughout the country," says Michael Rubinfeld, Artistic Producer of SummerWorks Theatre Festival.

AWARDS & PRIZES

In honour of the Festival's 20th Anniversary, SummerWorks has specially designed awards built for all winners by OCAD student, Chao Gao. All awards are adjudicated by a jury of three theatre professionals, except the NOW Magazine Audience Choice Award, which is determined by ballot.

SummerWorks Prize for Production

The prize is a free trip back to the Festival next year. All companies presenting new work are eligible.

WINNER: *Ride the Cyclone*

Contra Guys Award for New Work

Generously supported by two SummerWorks founders, Benj Gallander and Ben Stadelmann, the "Contra Guys Award for New Work" is a \$1,000 cash award presented to a theatre-maker for an outstanding new work (script or performance text).

WINNER: *Post Eden* (Honourable mention: *Kayak*)

National Theatre School Award for Set or Costume Design

This new award, sponsored by the National Theatre School, offers a \$750 cash prize to

a designer for an outstanding set or costume design.

WINNER: *Theory* (Honourable Mention: *Iphigenia at Aulis*)

Buddies in Bad Times Vanguard Award for Risk and Innovation

Also new, sponsored by Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, this \$750 cash prize is awarded to an individual or company in recognition of an artistic choice or choices exemplifying innovation and/or artistic risk.

WINNER: *Avatar*

Canadian Stage Award for Direction

Sponsored by the Canadian Stage Company, this \$1000 cash prize is awarded for an outstanding piece of direction at the Festival.

WINNER: Steve McCarthy, *Bliss*

The Spotlight Award

Awarded to a featured artist in a SummerWorks show. The winner receives a VIP pass to the Festival next year.

WINNERS: Edwige Jean-Pierre, *Even Darkness is Made of Light* and Adam Lazarus, *Wonderland*. (Honourable Mention: Rosemary Dunsmore, *Kayak*)

The Steamwhistle Emerging Artist Award

\$500 cash prize awarded to an artist early in their career who made an artistic impression during the Festival.

WINNER: Johnnie Walker, *Red Headed Stepchild* (Honourable Mention: *Countries Shaped Like Stars*)

RBC Arts Professional Award

This \$1000 cash prize recognizes the work, craft and dedication of an emerging arts professional. This award is made possible with the support of RBC.

WINNER: *Foster Child Play*

The NOW Magazine Audience Choice Award

Vote for your favourite SummerWorks production! Simply place your ticket stub in the NOW Audience Choice box as you leave the theatre. The Winner will receive \$1,500 in free advertising with NOW magazine. All shows are eligible for this prize.

WINNER: *Ride the Cyclone*

The winners of all nine awards were announced at the closing night party Sunday, April 15th at Factory Theatre Courtyard.